DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 029 004 SP 002 650

Social Responsibility in a Free Society.
Educational Policies Commission, Washington, D.C.
Pub Date 63
Note-39p.
Available from-National Education Association, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 ($1.25 clothbound; $0.35 pape r self-cover; discounts on quantity orders)
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC Not Available from EDRS.
Descriptors-*Citizenship Responsibility, Public Policy, *School Role
Identifiers-United States

The health of modern American society depends upon the social responsibility of its citizens; yet this responsibility, rooted in the home and school, has not been adequately developed. It is the role of the elementary school to offer children a secure place in which to learn and act independently of the home; to develop within them an understanding of concepts, such as interdependence, which nurture social conscience; and to provide examples, through its teachers, of interpersonal sensitivity. In the secondary school and college, the student should continue to acquire factual knowledge and develop a sensitivity to philosophical questions, both of which are necessary for reasoned social responsibility. Yet the schools and colleges, with the cooperation of the public, must also offer the student opportunities for participation directly in community life. Outlets must be provided for young adults to be of service to society, even after they have left school; thus far bureaucracies and many youth agencies, devoted to the very young, have not satisfied their needs. (LP)

Social Responsibility in a Free Society

EDUCATIONAL POLICIES COMMISSION

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 63-19814

For sale at the following prices: clothbound, $1.25 per copy; paper self-cover, 35¢ per copy. Discounts on quantity orders: 10 percent on 2-9 copies and 20 percent on 10 or more copies. All orders which amount to $2 or less must be accompanied by funds in payment. Carriage charges will be made on all orders not accompanied by funds in payment. Address communications and make checks payable to the National Education Association, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington 36, D.C.

THE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES COMMISSION

Of the National Education Association of the United States
and the American Association of School Administrators

A. JOHN HOLDEN, JR., *Chairman*
ARTHUR F. COREY, *Vice-Chairman*

ROBERTA S. BARNES
HAZEL A. BLANCHARD
SAMUEL M. BROWNELL
NATT B. BURBANK
WILLIAM G. CARR
JAMES B. CONANT
FINIS E. ENGLEMAN
NOVICE G. FAWCETT
WENDELL R. GODWIN
GEORGE D. HANN
CLARICE KLINE
RACHEL R. KNUTSON
MAX LERNER
MARGARET LINDSEY
JAMES D. LOGSDON
ELSIE PARNELL
JAMES W. REYNOLDS
O. MEREDITH WILSON

JAMES E. RUSSELL, *Secretary*
RICHARD L. RENFIELD, *Project Secretary*

The recommendations in this publication are those of the Educational Policies Commission, a commission of the National Education Association of the United States and the American Association of School Administrators. Publication in this form does not constitute formal approval by the sponsoring associations.

Foreword

In recent years the great crises facing the American people have led to widespread efforts to evaluate and improve education. Neither a Sputnik nor a depression is a valid reason for intensifying a scrutiny which ought to be intense at all times. Yet the Soviet challenge in space caused attention to turn to the academic side of education, and the more recent economic difficulties brought added attention to vocational education and to the problems of the disadvantaged. These events reveal a tendency to make educational policy in reaction to crisis, with the constant risk that programs may be skewed by over-reacting.

The debates of recent years have failed to give appropriate stress to a traditional aspect of education: the ethical dimensions. The constellation of qualities encompassed in terms like patriotism, good citizenship, morality, and character have always been in the forefront of educational objectives. As American schools seek to help pupils develop their rational capacities, they inevitably become involved in these ethical dimensions, for just as ethical character demands the ability to make reasoned choices, so does the ability to think demand ethical standards. To direct attention to this area, the Educational Policies Commission presents this statement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Social Responsibility in Modern America

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

The Declaration of Independence is a charter of individual liberties. It describes a way of life in which the central value is the individual himself, his concerns and actions, his consent, his happiness, his liberty, his life. It portrays government as the servant of the individual's purposes.

But the Declaration of Independence is more than a declaration of individual supremacy. It is also an expression of faith in the concern of free men for the public welfare. For a free society must rely heavily, if its values are to be defended and realized, on the voluntary actions of its citizens.

The good citizen knows that he has responsibilities not only toward his own affairs but also toward those of others. He knows that his responsibilities begin with persons most immediately near him: family, friends, and acquaintances. He demands for every

person what he demands for himself—the freedom to seek his own future. But he knows that such freedom can flourish only within a social structure which desires it and which has the strength to defend it. He therefore accepts his responsibility toward the system on which freedom depends, recognizing that this system must have his services, his support, and even at times his sacrifices. He is aware that no two persons will respond to these requirements in identical ways. Each citizen reveals his social responsibility in his own ways; all good citizens are aware of their responsibility to and for their fellow man.

A person's sense of his social responsibility gives rise to action which expresses it, to behavior which makes human relationships warm, rewarding, and constructive. Thus, this sense is more than a pragmatic requirement for advancing the public business and protecting the social system on which freedom depends. It is a personal necessity, a requirement of self-fulfillment. The feeling of connectedness with one's fellows is part of the feeling of being human.

It is the contention of this essay that social responsibility is not adequately developed in the American people today. In a society which produced the traditions of the quilting bee and barn raising, many citizens today appear indifferent to the well-being of others. In a society where men once pledged to the struggle for liberty their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor, many citizens today begrudge lesser contributions to the preservation of that liberty.

Thus, a socially responsible person cannot accept practices which deny human dignity. Yet racial and religious prejudice persists, to the detriment of millions at home and of America abroad, and efforts to correct it are greeted with derision and even violence.

Millions of disadvantaged Americans are congregated today in congested sections of the great cities. Their great need is to learn

the ways and skills of modern life. The disadvantaged therefore need good schools to attend and good models to emulate. Yet many Americans who are in a position to help refuse responsibility for the well-being of the disadvantaged. Rather than seek to help the disadvantaged, they make a point of avoiding all contact with them. Rather than pay for the needed services, they reject the necessary taxation as an infringement on private affluence. Even teachers, with whom much of the remaining hope lies, often prefer to leave for others the task of working with disadvantaged children.

Where personal concern for others is absent, public policy is likely to be unresponsive to public needs. Thus do matters of relations among individuals merge into problems of general policy. For example, although Americans well understand that the future of their nation depends on adequate education, still the American people have not yet taken steps needed to assure that opportunity for all children. Many communities with the ability to support their schools adequately have failed to do so, and many Americans reject all responsibility for the education of persons beyond their immediate neighbors. The very children whose home environments provide them with the least opportunity for success in the modern world—children who most need extra educational opportunity—are usually given the most crowded classes, the poorest facilities, and the least varied programs. In every state legislature and in the national congress, educational legislation intended to correct problems resulting from inequalities of wealth is often resisted precisely because it might succeed. Yet such resistance ought to crumble before concern for human dignity and an awareness that every undereducated American weakens the national fabric.

A minority of citizens actively holds the view that it is undesirable to promote social action. Under the banner of patriotism, they look on public action as an assault on private interest. They look on taxation as a form of theft and on all publicly managed and supported activities as the intrusions of incipient dictatorship. They

deny the right of the society to make demands on them for the general good. This group, though small, makes itself felt and cannot be ignored.

These shortcomings are symptoms of that insulation of individuals from each other which a democracy can ill afford in the face of modern challenges. The crisis is not merely one of deficient social responsibility. Selfishness and indifference have probably been widespread in all ages, but these deficiencies are of increasing concern today because the challenges before the society have so altered that the responses of a simpler day no longer serve.

The Minute Man of the Revolutionary era faced an enemy he knew in a fight he could understand. His readiness to take arms contributed directly to his own safety and the general security. Today there is no parallel to this form of action. The term *Minute Man* evokes patriotic memories, and it has been used for political effect. But the national well-being today requires of individuals something more complicated and rare than the Minute Man's rough-and-ready courage. It requires more knowledge, perceptiveness, and patience. For today's problems are as complex, subtle, and durable as they are grim.

The struggle with communism and communist imperialism is one requiring heavy expenditure of energy and treasure over many years. The drain on the nation continues to test the citizen's fortitude and wisdom. The citizen faces this test without the spur of open warfare. Though the dangers are fully as great as in the major wars of the recent past, the fervent emotions unleashed by war no longer prod the people.

American policy toward underdeveloped countries is another frustratingly drawn-out and relatively undramatic enterprise, with costs more visible than results.

The challenges which face the people on the domestic front seem less critical than those posed by communism, yet they may

in the end contain an even graver risk. The bewildering pace of change continually restructures ways of living and acting, requiring responses which demand more factual knowledge, a fuller understanding, and a keener devotion to the general welfare than ever before.

The number of problems which require expert or secret knowledge appears to be growing. Popular sovereignty loses validity if the people do not understand the nation's problems, if they cannot evaluate the alternative policies for meeting them, if they cannot relate events and choices to the values at stake in the world. But it remains the citizen's responsibility to demand action on social problems, to evaluate the appropriateness of action taken by his government, and to set tolerable limits of choice for his representatives. This responsibility requires a knowledge and analysis of events that cannot be obtained by the uneducated or the uninterested.

Thus social responsibility implies ever grea[illegible]emands on the individual. In the face of a widespread inadequacy of social responsibility to the demands of the times, it is fitting to reconsider how social responsibility grows in an individual and how it may be fostered.

The Growth of Social Responsibility

The socially responsible person is one for whom the general welfare, as he interprets it, is of deep personal concern. His sense of responsibility manifests itself in thoughts and actions which he believes to be right.

It is in adulthood that social responsibility is to be measured. But, as in the case of most basic attitudes, it is in infancy, childhood, and youth that the foundation must be laid. The growth of social responsibility is a process of identifying with other persons on an ever widening basis. Its growth takes place as a series of accretions even less precisely distinguishable from each other than the steps of physical development. Yet the changes are visible when viewed as they are here over periods of years.

Man is essentially a social being. That no man is an island is not just the insight of the poet and preacher; it is a psychological fact. The personal security which makes it possible for a child to live and grow can come only from a social relationship. From the cradle he develops in close interaction with other people. Their love is essential to his growth—as essential as food and shelter. He naturally responds to love with his own form of love. He soon learns that love entails obligations. The expectation of carrying

out obligations to others becomes an integral part of his life as he develops habits of helpfulness and consideration of others. This rudimentary conscience is basic to his developing social sense.

The child develops a considerable array of personal convictions long before going to school. Far from being a social cipher, the six-year-old is a bundle of convictions deeply felt if little understood. Those convictions necessarily reflect the social living that has occurred within his home and neighborhood. As he moves through his early school years he deepens his awareness of his connections to others. From a secure base in his relations with family, he enlarges his personal world to include companions, teachers, and others who come within his ken.

Adolescence brings drastic changes in body, interests, and responsibilities. It also endows the young person with a wonderful capacity to grow in social responsibility. The adolescent is flexible and capable of deep tenderness toward others, and he reveres good performance. Thus, he attaches himself to models of near perfection and passionately emulates them. His image of perfection leads him to set for himself and for others far-flung goals of achievement and high, often unrealistic standards. At the same time, because of great changes he is undergoing, the adolescent does not know himself well. His uncertainty makes him acutely conscious of his limitations, producing a sense of imperfection to counterbalance his desire for perfection. It also facilitates deep involvement with others, leading him to seek his values and status from others. Thus, his sense of personal stability and security comes to be based on his relationships with others. He often tends to lose himself in a group, bases his ideas of right and wrong on the standards of the group, and is uncritically hostile toward other groups.

This adolescent loyalty is not necessarily limited to adolescence. Its caricature is the individual who gives his all for dear old Siwash. It may be found also in athletic teams, combat groups, or the *Komsomol* organization. It may extend to a nation. There are

educational systems whose major purpose is to develop in the individual an uncritical life-long acceptance of the ways of his own nation. Totalitarian nations in particular often act on the conviction that they need many citizens of this type. There are voices in most nations which exalt blind loyalty.

There is no doubt that great enterprises have been carried out by groups bound by unthinking loyalty. But the fact remains that it is a low order of social responsibility, based on subservience rather than freedom.

Moreover, uncritical loyalty to a group does not necessarily entail loyalty to the values it represents. It may therefore provide no support or guidance if the group dissolves. A more reliable loyalty is that of the person who perceives the values that are manifested by the group as worthy of his support for their own sake. A permanent loyalty can be based only on a reasoned understanding of one's own values.

Nevertheless, uncritical group loyalty has its uses during adolescence. In the American culture it assists the adolescent to maintain control of himself in a period of decreased reliance on his home and of adjustment to new physical and emotional needs. It also seems to be a necessary stage in the development of social responsibility.

There is reason to be concerned with the fifty-year-old adolescent at the football game who identifies himself with the team. But his seventeen-year-old counterpart, behaving the same way, may be taking an important step toward full membership in society by widening the scope of his loyalties.

Even as the adolescent is finding security in his allegiances, he should be developing new self-reliance. The richer his experiences with his group have been, the more strength he will have to develop more rational loyalties. As he matures further, his atti-

tudes come to be determined less by social pressure, tradition, fear of ostracism, or ignorance of alternatives, and more by thought. In the pluralistic society, the mature person does not accept specific attitudes or values merely because he has been taught them. Rather, he becomes aware that what he does and what he fails to do affect others, and that it is reasonable to act in recognition of these truths. A mature social responsibility requires the exercise of reason.

The attainment of enlightened responsibility requires the individual to make deliberate, reasoned choices. He must gain some insight into the processes of his own group and view objectively those things which he has habitually admired or taken for granted. This process may not be painless. As idealists, young people want the objects of their devotion to be perfect. A young person reacts sharply to the discovery that an idol was false. As critical sensitivity develops, however, he comes to realize that groups which have commanded his allegiance do not necessarily have ideals which he, after reflection, is prepared to support; that a group's behavior may be inconsistent with its own ideals; and that mature allegiance consists precisely in helping the group move toward those ideals which the individual considers valid. Thus, whether referring to a local endeavor or a nation, social responsibility is not a mere matter of adjustment to the way things are.

Another common hurdle in the development of mature social responsibility is the stage of almost complete relativism of values. It occurs to many intelligent young people that since values seem relative there is little to choose between different courses of action and no one of them deserves the full commitment of one's precious self. Yet in the mature individual, criticism and loyalty go hand in hand. Precisely because his dedication to certain purposes and values is sincere and reasoned, he can choose those actions most likely to further them, and he does not permit the imperfection of the available alternatives to serve as an excuse for inaction.

The mature person's need for involvement in life can no longer be satisfied through purely personal contacts with a family or a group of friends, though these continue to be important. His social conscience extends beyond the immediately visible and conveniently available. His loyalties expand to include men he will never meet. He also desires understanding of his own values and ideas and those of other men, and he seeks to establish connections between values and behavior. He therefore develops reasoned loyalty to ideas, values, and institutions as well as to groups.

The values toward which the individual develops loyalty are part of the cultural heritage of the society. They can be intellectualized and treated in the abstract, but it takes experience to breathe life into them. For example, a concern for the welfare of others, if it is not experienced in life, remains an abstraction; and it is unlikely to lead to socially responsible behavior. Thus, even when the individual is mature enough to intellectualize his values and treat them in the abstract, the process of developing loyalty to values continues to require a group experience.

It is possible to define the general characteristics of the experience which contributes to social responsibility. It is a form of action which has deep meaning for the individual; it offers a personal challenge and has its own rewards. It reflects socially responsible values, and they are experienced in a real context. Just as social responsibility is manifested in behavior, so it grows through behavior. The role of the school, to which we now turn, is to nurture that behavior and to give it intellectual significance.

The Role of the School

It has always seemed reasonable to look to the school as the primary instrument for shaping the citizen. It is the most nearly universal of all social institutions; it is in fact the sole social institution which seeks contacts with all young persons. Further, it reaches them during those periods of their lives when they are most susceptible to influence. And its very purpose is to help them develop.

By the time the child reaches school age, however, many basic attitudes have taken firm hold. And, in general, he continues to spend much more time outside school than in it. The role of the community, and of the home in particular, in developing character can hardly be overstated. If parents do not provide the personal security on which healthy social attitudes are based and do not set examples for children to live by, the school's ability to develop the citizen is sharply curtailed, but its share of the responsibility for doing so rises. Another limitation of the ability of the school is the existence in the culture of many citizens, some of them in responsible and respected positions, who show a decided lack of social responsibility.

The difficulties of achieving goals relating to character have long been recognized. In the nineteenth century the school placed

its principal reliance on the study of literature to form the citizen. At that time, it was widely believed that practice followed precept. The schoolbooks of that day were replete with patriotic slogans and citations, on the assumption that those who could recite them would be patriots. Since many of these pupils developed into fine patriots, the assumption was considered valid, and even today there is pressure to teach this way.

But in the twentieth century the experience of the public school has fully demonstrated that the goals sought require considerably more than memorizing of precepts. Qualities of ethical character can benefit from academic learning, but it has been all too clearly demonstrated that it is possible for a person to be learned and evil.

As the need for good citizenship became more evident, especially following the Second World War, the complexities of character development became more fully understood. A number of special efforts were launched to help schools develop the citizen. During the 1940's and 50's they became so numerous that in 1954 the American Association of School Administrators devoted its annual yearbook to a description of them. As a result of this widespread experimentation and of careful evaluation of its outcomes, it is possible to describe the general characteristics of schools that successfully develop social responsibility.

Development of a sense of identity with society requires a complicated series of learnings. It develops upon the total environmental background, upon satisfactions and frustrations experienced in a variety of settings, and upon considerable knowledge about the society and the values which have shaped it. The school aims to produce in pupils an ability to think about and to assume social obligations. The route to that end involves many experiences that are not primarily intellectual and many which take place outside the school, although they may be directed by the teacher and planned within the school. They may involve civic participation and social

service, or they may be designed to strengthen the basis of personal security which makes rational social attitudes possible.

A rational appreciation of one's role in a free society can emerge only where there already exists a confident acceptance—although not necessarily a total approval—of the environment. Building the child's confidence is a necessary step. If the environment seems friendly, he gains in confidence. As he finds satisfaction in his social relationships and enjoys some measure of success in group enterprises, he discovers his individuality and its worth in a social context.

The friendly environment is not the lax environment. It offers challenges to which the child responds. He profits from the natural tension between what he knows and what he would like to know. Good teaching is challenging, not frightening. The teacher who challenges the child to perform well is the one whose respect the child senses. But the term *well* must be defined. Good performance is not achieved simply by adherence to such standards as high grades or the teacher's approval, which derive their value not from the child's perception of their importance but rather from a relationship arbitrarily established by the authorities. Good performance, humanely understood, is achievement of inherent benefit to the child for his own sake. Furthermore, no single standard of good performance can be established for all children. Expectations which are placed on a child are those that are good for *him*. More than anything else, it is the ability of the teacher to set, from moment to moment, realistic though challenging expectations for each child, and to help the child achieve them, that determines professional competence; and it is that ability which determines the humaneness of the school—its devotion to the dignity of the individual.

The willingness to cooperate with the world rationally and the ability to resist it rationally are prerogatives of those for whom

reality is tolerable. Most children appear to have this good fortune. But for some, life is so difficult that the fostering of understanding will not promote security. Children who are victimized by home and community conditions and by prejudice may react with hostility or apathy to the environment. Such children, it is commonly said, are not willing to "listen to reason." If, as a result, their behavior is seriously detrimental to themselves or others, the school may have to resort to authoritarian means. It may thus obtain the desired result in external behavior, but the attempt to base action on subservience rather than understanding does not seriously advance the child's dignity, confidence, ability to contribute, or social responsibility.

An educational environment for children with severe handicaps requires small classes and able teachers. The teacher must, above all, be capable of respecting all children for their humanity and for the potentials which have been submerged within them by a hostile environment. Many children have never seen reason to hope for a better future, and the child without hope will not strive. He has little stake in the social well-being. But the child who senses the teacher's respect can have the self-confidence to work hard. The school has the tremendous obligation of giving hope to all children, and the deeply humane teacher has the inestimable capacity of giving that hope.

The elementary school usually provides the child's first extended experience with society outside the home. For him the school is the society. It provides him with group experiences of a new sort. For the first time he finds himself working or playing with many other children and relating to an adult outside his family for a considerable part of each day. Since the elementary school is so large a part of the young child's life experience, the nature of his experience there can have an important impact on his developing sense of social responsibility.

Fundamental to every development in the elementary school are the skills of communication and computation without which little information can be gathered or shared. The school that fails to develop these skills is likely to fail also with every other objective before it. The elementary school therefore places development of these skills first on its agenda.

Of equivalent importance in developing social responsibility is knowledge of social relationships. A significant understanding of the complexities of social relationships requires considerable mental effort, based on disciplined knowledge and exchange of ideas. Yet, in most elementary schools too great a stress on systematic subject matter may lead to confusion rather than understanding. The excellent elementary school teacher resolves this apparent dilemma by using organized subject matter not as an end in itself, but as the resource from which to draw examples which illuminate general concepts.

The good elementary school, for example, seeks to develop understanding of such a concept as interdependence. To this end it draws on considerable factual matter from fields like geography, economics, and history, integrating them in terms of the pupil and his learning rather than in terms of the subject itself. Such a school makes no pretense of developing young geographers, economists, or historians. It recognizes in those fields, however, indispensable means for developing understandings of concepts which are part of the foundation of social responsibility.

The good elementary school, for example, seeks to develop lasting feelings about respect for other people, toleration of their ways and views, obeying the laws, the responsibility of being interested in the public welfare, and other ingredients of the social conscience. The school must lead the child to realize that the society is "we," not "they," and that, like others, "I" have the capacity to contribute to my family and community and to help other human

beings—or to hamper them. The teacher, through all his actions, can develop children's sensitivity toward others. If the teacher truly respects all children, they respond not only with improved learning, but with the desire to requite respect with respect. The elementary school teacher has an opportunity—and a responsibility—which few people have to be an effectively inspiring model for young Americans.

Special activities within the school, as well as the general experience of school life, can be effective in developing social attitudes in elementary school children. Even kindergarteners can participate, with as much profit as vigor, in establishing rules for playgrounds, hallways, and stairways. Elementary school children, under guidance but not dictation, can pass effective and wise judgment on the persistent violator. Keeping the adjacent streets clean can be a meaningful responsibility for them and can bring encouraging gratitude from local residents and merchants. Developing a list of good social qualities and the reasons behind them and then judging at intervals how well he measures up to them can help the older elementary school child understand and improve his relationships with other people. These are but a few of the many special activities through which elementary schools can foster the sense of social responsibility.

The importance of the home requires that teacher and parent work toward the same end of fostering the social conscience. Teachers should discuss common problems with parents and, when advisable, plan to solve them cooperatively.

While working with the parents, however, the elementary school helps the child learn to function outside the home and to relate himself to a larger world. The child first entering the elementary school is always dependent upon his family. The school is an instrument by which he is liberated from complete dependence upon the home and learns to be effective in wider social settings.

In teaching the child to act independently of the home, the elementary school makes one of its major contributions to his sense of social responsibility. It gives him a secure environment for learning and practicing the skills of social interaction.

With the onset of adolescence, the intellectual and social abilities and the needs of young people increase in depth and scope. The task of promoting intellectual growth and social responsibility is therefore of a different nature at the secondary level.

At the outset of discussion of the secondary school, it is necessary to stress again the overwhelming importance of the home in shaping the general development of each child and, in particular, his social development. For example, an important element in social responsibility is the open mind. When parents are convinced that most matters, however complex, have only one side, they can negate the school's best efforts to develop the skills of honest inquiry and of withholding judgment. Yet these are among the most important skills of social responsibility, and the school must in any case seek to develop them.

At the secondary level the pupil increases his social knowledge and develops his ability to think seriously about it. Understanding social organization is essentially a rational process involving factual knowledge, discovery of the connection of things, and sensitivity to philosophical assumptions. A major part of the secondary school curriculum is designed to enable pupils to acquire this knowledge and understanding, and the social studies and English especially deal directly with it. For example, American history portrays the working out in practice of the basic values of this nation. The social sciences in general should provide understanding of the preferences—the value structures—that give coherence and distinctiveness to this and competing social systems.

Philosophical perspectives and skill in communication are essential to the acquisition and interpretation of social knowledge.

The study of English contributes to both. The school attempts continuous development of skill in communication, both oral and written. And English literature opens to the pupil the world of humane letters.

It is vital that the student develop a sufficient interest in the society that he will be motivated to remain informed for the rest of his life. Only thus can he hope to be an effective citizen. Controversial issues are among those which are likely to elicit the most genuine participation of young people, as of adults. If the rigidity of the community and timidity of educators stifle analysis of such issues, the school loses one of its best tools for fostering serious social thought and concern.

Other parts of the program can also contribute to the development of social responsibility. The natural sciences, for example, impart knowledge which is fundamental to an understanding of many of the nation's greatest problems. By teaching scientific methods of inquiring, by demonstrating the importance of an honest relationship between data and conclusions, they contribute to the development of the rational powers. Like all subjects, the natural sciences should help students progress toward a life of thought, which is increasingly essential to effective social responsibility. The person who is helpless before the tyranny of self or of the environment can contribute little to the understanding or solution of complex problems.

The ability to think with depth, enthusiasm, frankness, and freshness lurks not far beneath the surface in the emotionally healthy adolescent. The intense interest of adolescents in themselves, their tendency to idealism, their deep need for the approbation and attention of others, their intense group loyalties, and their ability to love and admire other people intensely are rich resources for the skilled teacher. These qualities can inspire discussion of motivation to good and to evil and hence the consideration of the

meaning of good and evil. They can lead to thinking about conformity, mediocrity, individuality, and excellence. They can lead to examination of personal motivations and values and hence of the relationship between values and action, between ideals and reality, between liberty and human nature. They can motivate consideration of the type of society one desires and of the ways for bringing it about. In and out of school, adults who attempt to utilize these resources of adolescence are repeatedly heartened and moved by the depth of the soul-searching that accompanies such discussions.

Such experiences have the advantage of helping the school to draw out the potentials of the individual rather than promote his conformity to certain norms. Serious emphasis on problems to which there is no single correct answer is unlikely to lead to worship of the standard answer.

In addition, every effort should be made to increase the independence and initiative of students in the planning and execution of their studies and school activities. As pupils mature, they should have ever greater freedom of action. Self-reliance is essential to social responsibility.

The secondary school that successfully develops the social sense offers also a substantial program of pupil activities designed to supplement the ability of the school to reach all children. Some pupils, particularly those with a deep sense of exclusion from the affairs of the society, find little meaning in their ordinary schoolwork, yet opportunities to prepare for a vocation or participate in an avocation may seem to them worthwhile. These opportunities may be in vocational courses, clubs, or sports. Similarly, the successful secondary school consciously seeks to provide outlets for the developing sense of loyalty of its pupils. Programs of sports and clubs, for example, serve not only to focus the energies of dedicated participants; they may provide also experiences which generate in nonparticipants a feeling of being part of the school and of its ac-

tivities. These experiences are of more than passing consequence, for the feeling of belonging is the rootstock of loyalty. The successful school insures that every child shares this feeling.

A problem arises here because both sports and clubs may be misused. The case of overemphasis on competitive sports is common; so is the case of clubs that become cliques. Those responsible for school policies should continually revaluate their sport and club programs to make sure that they do genuinely serve to generate a feeling of belonging.

A more important means by which the successful secondary school generates the feeling of belonging to a worthy community and participating in its affairs is by the process of involving its students directly in the life of the community. Significant social experience is necessary at every stage in the development of the sense of social responsibility. But the definition of *significant* evolves as the child matures. The closer the child comes to adulthood, the more he looks on his proper role in society as that of an adult. His sense of his role in the community, however, is likely to have outrun the community's concept of the adolescent role. The pupil, therefore, needs help in generating the means by which he may participate in the society in ways that have meaning for him. Every school is in a community, and the community can be a laboratory containing the raw materials of civic participation. The successful school uses its community as a laboratory.

It is possible to achieve civic experience in connection with any course in any subject. Some subjects possess obvious overtones of civic participation. The course usually called modern problems, for example, is an effort to analyze economic, social, or political affairs in American communities. It has innumerable opportunities to make its learning real by reference to what is happening in the community outside the school. It may consider, for example, the local work of social agencies, in order to give the student a sense of the human problems that his society faces.

Opportunities for civic activities which supplement academic study also arise in the school. In American history courses, for example, the study of the Constitution can be illuminated if at the same time the students undertake to revise the constitution of the student government. Such an activity makes several contributions to the growth of social responsibility. It enhances insight into the meaning of abstract terms, such as separation of powers and checks and balances. It provides opportunity to practice the skills involved in active citizenship. Its most important contribution, however, is in the fact that the participating pupil experiences directly some of the values which lie at the base of the American system. For example, a pupil involved in such an experience raises questions about justice: what power ought one pupil have to decide another pupil's affairs? Thus he is acquiring the extra dimension needed to internalize and personalize the values of the system. It then makes sense in the classroom to rationalize and abstract those values. It is from meaningful personal experience, however, that his possession of these values becomes of direct significance in his life.

But even the best learning and activity within the school are not enough to develop a mature sense of social responsibility. Eventually, the student must achieve a sense of constructive participation in the significant business of the community outside the school. The hard discipline of free men is not mastered in the schoolroom alone.

Entire inventories of tested suggestions for genuine civic participation are available to schools. But providing this kind of experience poses obvious curricular and administrative difficulties. Of these, none exceeds the problem of time. The teacher who is skilled in planning experiences that take place entirely inside the classroom may have difficulty in planning activities to take place outside. He may lack knowledge of how to do it, and he usually lacks the

experience. He may be deterred by his expectation of public criticism. Even when he is accomplished at the task, however, its planning and execution require considerable time and energy. Therefore, if the community is to be used as a laboratory, the teachers concerned must be permitted to set aside time in their schedules for planning, much like teachers who work on television; the syllabus must include time for planning and execution of the activities on the part of the pupils; and classes must be small enough to permit the teacher to make the difficult and refined adjustments that experience has shown to be necessary in community-involvement activities.

Schools should also mobilize those agencies in the community which are their potential allies. In most communities there are groups whose purpose is to supply social experience to children. Schools have traditionally worked with scouting, social service, and church-related groups in seeking social experience. But there is much to be said for the wish of officials in service agencies that the schools would call on them still more often to offer suggestions and request help. It is not difficult to establish cooperative relationships with such groups, and all schools should seek them. Agencies which seek to serve youth are natural supporters of the school, and considerable benefit accrues to the school that takes full advantage of their services.

In these ways the community-oriented secondary school can contribute fundamentally to development of social responsibility. Yet, for reasons beyond its control, it must leave an important part of the task undone. As the student emerges from the high school, he is normally still enmeshed in the emotional uncertainties of adolescence; he lacks the experience and the intellectual maturity to achieve a rational awareness of himself and his relations with his fellow man; he has not had time to accumulate much of the knowledge and understanding required for successful involvement in the important issues of the society.

The maturing of social responsibility does not come automatically with age. It requires, among other things, an environment that stimulates deep thought about ethics in society, with each individual striving to reach his own conclusions. Ethical character requires an environment in which thought is used to free oneself as far as possible from abject submission to pressure for conformity. The necessary stimulus may elude students in colleges, but it is unlikely today to be found anywhere else on a mass scale. This consideration calls for radical expansion of opportunities for education beyond the high school, whether that education be supplied in colleges provided for older youth or in other types of institutions established for the education of adults.

The college has traditionally attempted to foster mature thinking. Here the student is led to consider himself, to learn that his preconceptions influence his perceptions. He raises questions about his environment and considers how he relates to his acquaintances and to the human race. He reflects on the meaning and condition of humanity. The age-old questions of man before God and the universe engage his interest. He examines his life: "Who am I?" "Why am I here?" "What is right, what wrong?" "What is true?" "How do I know truth?" These are the central focus of the liberal curriculum. How they are presented to each student necessarily varies. Some students are mature enough and involved enough to plunge into such questions without further preparation. Some have considered them even in high school. Yet most students, even at the college level, do not quickly or easily come to grips with such abstract questions. For many college students, problems of ethics, aesthetics, logic, or metaphysics, initially at least, are remote, uninteresting, or even trivial.

No specific syllabus can be recommended as a universal solution to this problem, and no specific method can be suggested to build the bridge from student interest to abstract learning. It is the highly creative teacher who can pose philosophical questions in a

manner meaningful to students of varied backgrounds and levels of maturity. What can be stated with certainty is that colleges must increasingly recognize the same problem of motivation with which the elementary and high schools have been grappling for decades. Some colleges may even have to seek contact with many students by vocational training, sports, or clubs. Through the intellectual content which can be infused into these activities, or through the time which they gain for the college, the student can be led toward a life of thought.

The successful college also makes an attempt to build directly on the community-orientation of the secondary school. At this level even more than at the high school level, the opportunity for civic participation is rich. At the high school level the teacher and the pupils suffer from the fact that the adolescent is not accorded a full role in the American society today. In the main, leaders of the society do not consider high school pupils to be adults, and their teachers frequently share this attitude. But at the college level, the student is normally thought of as capable of accepting full responsibility for himself. It is therefore possible for him to participate in real civic activities without risking the same criticism as might be aimed at the high school adolescent.

But the problem of time remains grave. As at the secondary level, it is necessary to make allowance in the loads and teaching schedules of college teachers for the extra effort required to introduce the community as a laboratory in their teaching.

In addition to the civic experiences which he may provide, the teacher has an important role as a model for students in developing a sense of social responsibility. Evidence of this quality should be basic to selection of teachers, and its further development should be a major objective of teacher education.

Implications for Public Policy

If the schools are to be the society's main agent for the development of social responsibility, circumstances must be created to enable the schools to do the job. Part of the needed support is financial; part of it must be in the form of improved opportunities for social participation outside the school.

Obviously, the strength of a school, like the strength of a nation, depends on a multitude of human factors, and not merely on money. But it is equally obvious that even the most dedicated and talented personnel cannot do an adequate job with inadequate resources. The teaching of social responsibility is demanding of time, skill, and energy. If classes are too large, it is not possible for teachers, however skilled and devoted, to plan the individual experiences for pupils without which little progress can be made toward social responsibility. Thus, as class sizes increase, the part of the school program that provides experiences outside the classroom goes by the board, and the experience of civic participation, which is essential to growth of social responsibility, becomes impossible of achievement through the school. Further, it should be noted that unreasonable teaching conditions tend to be most prevalent in the very areas where, because the home contributes least to education, the teaching job is largest and most difficult. The

common tendency to save money by increasing class loads therefore results in making it impossible for schools to achieve the objectives set for them.

Under these circumstances the alternatives must be clearly recognized: either the public must expect less of the schools or it must make better results possible.

Yet even in the case of the best-endowed schools, it is necessary to consider what may be done outside the school to provide those types of civic experience that are reserved in our society for adults. For younger Americans, too, additional civic experiences provided by agencies other than the school are helpful and, if the school provides none, essential.

The providing of civic experience in the form of direct participation in the affairs of the society has long been an objective of a large number of organizations serving youth and adults within the American society. It is therefore worth considering what these opportunities are in American life today, how they are made available to young persons, and what may be done to increase the spread and depth of their services to young Americans.

Many opportunities for social participation exist, and very large numbers of young Americans take advantage of them. The largest single category is probably found in the activity programs of most churches. The usual American church conducts a web of programs designed to offer opportunities for persons of every age to involve themselves in beneficial forms of service.

Opportunities for non-church-related involvement are also widely available. Young adults serve as tutors to needy children, work in public hospitals or settlement houses, counsel in charity camps, join the Peace Corps, and serve as political party helpers. The Scouting organizations enable over three million boys and two and one-half million girls, plus a total of almost three million adult volunteers, to involve themselves in their communities. Their

programs involve not only camping and outdoor activities but also a wide range of social services.

The Commission on Youth Service Projects, a council of more than thirty church-related and private organizations, each year offers several hundred programs for young people as individuals and as groups to donate their time, energies, and resources to community service projects, institutional service projects, and study and working seminars related to problems of the society. These projects allow youths to involve themselves in the basic problems of the society and to participate in a significant manner to help solve these problems.

The Red Cross, Cancer Society, Heart Association, United Givers Fund, Community Chest, and many similar organizations use the volunteer services of young Americans, as do state mental hospitals, Veterans Administration hospitals, and other public and private institutions. There are also wide varieties of service opportunities in Young Men's Christian and Hebrew Associations, boys clubs, and the Salvation Army.

A superficial examination of the organizations just enumerated conveys the impression that opportunities for youth involvement are great. The number of millions involved would confirm the impression. But a more thorough and more candid examination does not support that view. True, the Girl Scouts enroll more than two and one-half million girls, but more than half of them are under ten years of age. Less than five percent of the enrollment is in the fifteen-to-seventeen year bracket of Senior Scouts, and there is no regular enrollment above age seventeen.

This same pattern is repeated in other youth-service agencies: high appeal for the very young, at least in the middle and upper income groups; decreasing appeal in adolescence; and disappearance of almost all interest in participation as the young people leave high school. This is an anomaly, for every recent study of their

needs and desires reveals that many young Americans are eager to serve. They possess high social motivation and hope to do good for mankind. These motivations do not find satisfactory outlets in the culture of today. The reasons for this lack should be examined.

Partly it may be explained by blocks to adequate communication. The young men and women may not know of the opportunities that are available. They may lack training required to fill the positions or may not know how to go about getting it. They may not know where to turn for information. Too often, however, they have accurate information, and it is precisely because they know what the opportunities are that they avoid them.

One of the major causes of disaffiliation is undoubtedly the belief—often rooted in reality—that the things that young people will be asked or permitted to do are trivia, unworthy of their time and effort.

Further, the size and complexity of social service organizations may be a barrier. If a service is of real significance, it necessarily involves an administrative framework capable of directing the activity in light of many considerations not visible to the participants. The youthful volunteer may look on this framework not as a means of accomplishing a worthy end, but rather as a lumbering bureaucracy in which he may merely lose his way. He may be unwilling to accept the modesty of the contribution he is likely to make. He may, in short, be requited for his good intentions with the same frustration that befalls most Americans in a modern age: the awareness that they are small cogs in a vast and complex machine.

It is evident that the American society has not turned sufficient attention to the problem of finding ways to involve its young citizens. When youth's problem was considered to be intellectual, the society created a universal institution to deal with it: the public school. It has not seen fit as yet to provide any equally available instrument designed to give all Americans a sense of meaningful participation in the society. The school-leaving age thus becomes

the point at which the society cuts the young person loose. Many youth-service organizations deal with youth while in school—in effect they rely on the school to provide the institutional framework of their operations—and youth have no place to go when school is out. This practice assumes, contrary to fact, that the young person is fully educated when he leaves school. Youth who are cut loose on leaving school thus quickly lose contact with social opportunities. The sole institution which pretends to deal with them on a universal base is Selective Service, and its contact is both transitory and unwelcome. For the young women, there is not even that agency. Whether they are employed or unemployed is not the responsibility of any agency. There is no guidance to help them find their way, no counsellor, no friend. They are truly our lost generation.

Given these realities, it is little wonder that many Americans have an underdeveloped sense of social responsibility. If it is valid to charge that the American people are overly concerned with themselves—selfish and addicted to privatism—that is hardly a surprise. The barriers to civic participation by pupils are formidable, and once a young American leaves school or college, he is expected to make his own way, establish his career and his family. As he dedicates himself, quite correctly, to these personal ends, the society offers him scant inducement to find time for consideration of its needs. He may of course choose service as a career. In that case he will usually find that the rewards in money and status are not great.

The traditional assumption that Americans would have an adequately developed sense of social responsibility was rooted in another assumption: namely, that the school could develop this sense and that it would do so for most Americans. It is true that the school can make a profound contribution in this regard; indeed, the contribution of the school is indispensable. But the schools cannot provide all the necessary experience in the adolescent years,

even under the best of circumstances. And in most cases, the school has not been permitted to do that large part of the job which, with proper support, it could do.

It is important that the American society turn concentrated attention to this problem. The first and most obvious thing to be done is to find ways to intensify the programs and enrollments of the agencies that now provide opportunities for social and civic participation. Some important part of the need can certainly be met by an intensification of the existing pattern. It would be possible, for example, to call a national conference of leaders of youth-service organizations to plan concrete steps for expanding service opportunities and enhancing their appeal to young adults. This might be done under the auspices of the White House, as has been done on other occasions.

In the meantime, conditions which reduce the appeal of service opportunities should be remedied. For instance, many youth-service agencies have tended to treat young volunteers like children, concentrating in the hands of adult leaders the powers of choice and decision. A greater recognition of the leadership of the young persons themselves and a greater willingness to trust their judgment would undoubtedly improve many programs. They are less likely than their elders to choose activities they think of as trivial, and their participation is more likely to be enthusiastic and thus educational.

Much can and should be done to expand and intensify the activities of the existing agencies. The critical policy question, however, is whether this would be enough. The question can be stated this way: If all the voluntary private agencies did everything they might reasonably be expected to do, would meaningful opportunities for all American youth to participate in the society's affairs be available?

By the testimony of many officials of service organizations, the answer is clearly negative. There is no reasonable prospect of

involving as many as half of the nation's young adults in the service organizations as presently conceived.

One of the basic reasons for this inadequacy—the voluntary nature of the organizations—cannot and should not be eliminated. Compulsion, it is true, is traditional for securing involvement in education and in military service. But in the arena of social participation, voluntarism is essential. The desire to participate probably cannot be developed by making participation compulsory. And even if some participants would benefit from a compelled experience, the added period of regimentation could hardly be defended as a matter of policy. Yet if there is no requirement to serve, only those who already possess a strong sense of social responsibility are likely to seek opportunities for service.

It is therefore necessary to try to strengthen the present voluntary framework. Two steps which immediately suggest themselves are centralization of recruitment in the community and elevation of the prestige of service through the public backing of community, state, and national leaders.

One possibility is the establishment of experimental youth-service centers by interested communities. These centers would combine and coordinate, on a voluntary basis, existing youth-service agencies. They would provide guidance and training for persons wishing to serve others on a part-time or full-time basis. They could be staffed by full-time professionals supplemented by volunteers and could provide a focus for new ideas on service.

The political leadership could lend its support to the centers, and educators could publicize their existence. If they proved to be an important asset to the community, and if the leaders in the community publicly recognized them as such, the centers would acquire the prestige which would attract more and more young people. They would thus help to ensure that today's young people, as tomorrow's adult citizens, would demonstrate the will to make of their society all that they wish it to be.

Conclusion

The continued health of the American society—perhaps its very survival—demands a high and rising awareness of social responsibility on the part of the people. For the socially responsible person, the welfare of his fellow man is of deep personal concern. That depth of concern comes from a succession of social interactions, beginning in infancy, and from the ability to attack with understanding the complex problems that face the nation and the world.

Development of the ability to think and understand is, overwhelmingly, the responsibility of the schools and colleges. The role of the schools and colleges in providing the necessary social experiences can be as large as the community is willing to grant and as the maturity of the students will permit. In most cases, however, the highest stage of social interaction—significant, adult participation in the important affairs of the community and the nation—must await the post-school years.

So far, public support has not been adequate to permit the schools to make their best contribution to either the intellectual or the social ingredients of social responsibility. And so far the community has not provided the needed civic participation for most of its members.

The American people must somehow be made aware of what is at stake in this matter. They must give greater financial support to their schools. They must yield to their young citizens a social role that will enable them to become the good citizens of the future. And they must find ways to elevate and improve the activities of those character-forming agencies which supplement the schools. If they do not do these things, the consequences of their neglect are not pleasant to contemplate.